

# Now for Scientific Study of the Tramp and How to Reform or Prevent Him

Equalling Collectively the Entire Population of Baltimore, He Exists Solely at the Expense of Those Who Work for Their Living and Inflicts Much Additional Loss on Them Through Fires.

By James B. Morrow.

Human lives are going to waste, as well as coal, trees, soil, and water. Two armies of tramps are ceaselessly crossing the country, one toward the West and one toward the East, both passing through St. Louis or Chicago.

The Southern route is preferred in winter. At that season of the year the army tramping to the East becomes a narrow procession of marchers. California, bright with the sun, is a happy camping ground in cold weather. Though the line is thin, men are moving constantly. So the armies are ever in motion. No count of them has ever been made. Experts say, however, that they number at least five hundred thousand men. They live off the people as they go along.

Tramps eat—the food is either stolen or begged. They use tobacco and liquor. Shoes

were been vagrants, vagabonds, ramblers, wanderers, strollers and beggars. When the English monasteries were closed during the sixteenth century thousands of poor and idle persons living on the charity of the monks turned public mendicants. In 1530, under Henry VIII, a sound man physically found begging might be "tied to the end of a cart and beaten with whips throughout the town till his body be bloody by reason of such whipping." Still later the "upper part of the aristocracy" of a tramp's ear "might be clean cut off." When such punishment was not enough to cause an able bodied idler to change his scheme of life he could be tried and executed as a felon.

Those were iron days; these are the days of mercy, charity and clemency toward the unfortunate and the delinquent. The



HALF A MILLION TRAMPS ARE NOW SUBSISTING UPON THE INDUSTRIOUS PEOPLE OF AMERICA.

are on their feet and clothing covers their bodies. Whatever they eat, smoke, drink or wear costs them nothing in labor or money. Their lives are going to waste; that is clear. Besides, they are a charge on industry. Suppose the nation were taxed to support a city as large as Cleveland or Baltimore filled with idle men?

Careful students estimate that tramps are costing the railroads of the United States the sum of \$18,500,000 annually. An official of the Baltimore & Ohio company recently said: "Never in history has there been such a vicious, such a destructive horde of vagrants on the railroads of America as now."

But the expense to the railroads is small when compared with the total that the two armies are costing the rest of the country, which can hardly be less than \$75,000,000 a year. Perhaps it is a great deal more. A census of tramps will be impossible so long as they are permitted to run at large. Putting them into figures, therefore, is to attempt an uncertainty. It is known, however, that about twelve thousand of them were killed in four years while trespassing on railroads and that about thirteen thousand were injured. The property destroyed by tramps is doubtless larger in value than is the sum of their support.

What can be done with them? The Russell Sage Foundation has the problem up for scientific consideration. There have al-

ready been a number of studies of the tramp after all is a human being. At first he may have been an honest but a weak man looking for work. Or he might have been a periodical drunkard. Perhaps he was neglected in his childhood. Maybe he is a fugitive from justice. Possibly some one of his ancestors had gypsy instincts. Anyway, he is a serious social study and has been ever since the panic of 1873.

In that year business, frenzied over speculation in real estate, collapsed. Mills, mines and factories were closed. Hungry men tramped the East and Middle West looking for work. They were fed because they were strangers and were suffering unusual misfortune. Until then the word tramp had not been put into circulation, and was found nowhere in the laws of the various states. Previous to that time vagrants were something of a picturesque curiosity, especially in small places and rural communities. Suddenly they appeared under a new name in all parts of the country north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. Flies of five or six would solicit food from house to house in villages or near important railroads. To have fed all who applied would have impoverished an ordinary citizen. Many had to be turned away. Thus came into use the signs, made with chalk on fences and gate posts, indicating the generosity or lack of generosity of the individual inhabitant. The tramp question

so begun remains to be settled. From year to year it has grown greater and more difficult to handle. Tramps are increasing in number. Little is known about them, less indeed than about the Indians, Africans and Hottentots.

Laws have been passed to control them, but the laws are local, and, instead of catching them and holding them for study and treatment, pass them on to some town in the next county. Thus while they are everywhere, they are still a social riddle and a human mystery. They beg at doors, charity societies, municipal lodging places, missions and soup houses, and then pass on into the unknown, leaving no physical sign behind. Often they steal. Sometimes they burn. Many of them are criminals, many are workmen, many are simply parasites scrounging at and preying on the public that works and tries to be prudent with its earnings.

Just a decade before the severe business depression of 1873, Russell Sage, who had been an errand boy in a grocery store at Troy, moved to New York that he might engage in selling puts and calls at the Stock Exchange. Presently he became a money lender. On his death and by his will, his estate, valued at \$75,000,000, was turned over to his widow, Mrs. Sage is using \$10,000,000 of the money for "the improvement of social and living conditions

in the United States of America." John M. Glenn is the secretary and general director of the foundation so established. He is a Baltimore man, a lawyer, and a specialist in sociological questions.

It plans old Russell Sage were to return to life he probably would be dumfounded to learn that part of his fortune is being spent in an investigation of the tramp problem. Nevertheless, the question is big and vital enough for any man's money. I asked Mr. Glenn why Sage left the whole burden of distributing his immense estate to Mrs. Sage.

"You will have to wait until you get to heaven for an answer," he replied.

It is conceded, however, that the fortune accumulated with so much thrift, industry and sagacity could not have gone into a wiser or more kindly management. "The Foundation," Mr. Glenn said, "does not attempt to relieve individual or family need. Its effort is to eradicate, so far as possible, the cause of poverty and ignorance, rather than to relieve the sufferings of those who are poor or ignorant."

Colleges wanting funds, persons needing financial help, churches desiring organs and towns seeking free libraries will be turned away empty-handed if they apply to Mrs. Sage or Mr. Glenn. The income from the \$10,000,000 given the Foundation is being spent, Mr. Glenn explains, for such work as the "anti-tuberculosis campaign, movements for public recreation and model tenement houses, the placing out and management of children in institutions, the medical inspection of schools, the extension of charity organizations, the propaganda for prevention of blindness, the study of workmen's insurance and the investigation of the salary loan and chattel loan business in the large cities of the United States."

Naturally the tramp, nearly always poor, occasionally illiterate, is a proper subject for intelligent inquiry. The Foundation, however, has gone further than the tramp. It is also interested in the homeless man. All tramps are homeless, but all homeless men are not tramps. There are said to be forty thousand homeless men in Chicago every winter. After the panic of October, 1907, word going up and down the highways and railroad tracks in all directions that Chicago would supply free food and beds to the unemployed, sixty thousand men, it is estimated, poured into that city, most of them remaining until spring.

As a basis for its research into the causes that turn some men into itinerant peddlers and mendicants and others into swindlers, impostors and writers of begging letters, and still others into permanent dwellers in cheap lodging houses, the Foundation has taken the remarkable study of Mrs. Alice Willard Solenberger, then Miss Willard, was put in charge of the central district of the Chicago Bureau of Charities. She worked for several years in a region

crowded with lodging houses. A great throng of men and boys came within her observation or passed before her desk. In her study she has taken one thousand typical cases and has classified them as an entomologist would classify so many bugs. Like all scientists, she approached her task without prejudice. Manifestly she was full of sympathy, even though she was conscientious in her efforts to obtain the truth.

People living in cities, with homes of their own and all the ordinary comforts of life, do not realize that thousands of human beings are sleeping nightly out of doors, in stairways, in empty barrels and boxes, and in beds that are fit only for bears. If there are half a million tramps there must be double that number of homeless men and boys—not beggars, for most part, but seasoned workers and periodical workers without family ties. Minneapolis and St. Paul, for example, near the forests and wheat fields of the Northwest, have a large shifting population of men without homes.

There are 100 lodging houses in Minneapolis where beds may be rented for 30 cents apiece. In the year 1910 the average number of lodgers was 3,300 a night. Some nights there were as many as 6,000. There are hundreds of homeless men in Pittsburg, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Detroit and thousands in such cities as Boston, New York, Philadelphia and St. Louis.

Investigators of cheap lodging houses divide the inmates into four classes—the self-supporting, the occasional and the chronic dependents and the parasites. These men differ, it must be understood, from tramps, who are really in a class by themselves. The self-supporting man may be a sailor, a lumber worker, or a harvest hand. If he spends his money before he returns to work, he may become temporarily dependent. Possibly he may try begging on the street or peddling sheetstings, which is mendicancy clumsily disguised. Should the little spark of self-respect that remains happen to go out, he drifts into begging as a permanent means of living. And once a beggar always a beggar, so the experts declare.

The chronic dependents are those who are aged, deformed, crippled, deaf, blind or ill of incurable diseases. Drunkards, drug users and feeble-minded men are included in this particular class. The parasites are composed of professional tramps, criminals, swindlers and the writers of pathetic letters. Such men read the newspapers for suggestions to expand their peculiar fields of fraud. A cloud of victims simultaneously appears after every great fire, flood or earthquake. They claim to have lost their families or their fortunes, and they have the thumbs and dirty documents to prove their sorrowful statements. Dr. Osler's alleged observation that every man has saved, may be they are robbed men of sixty ought to be considered. They gave the old swindlers a new line of prom-

ising endeavor. They rose on massed and hurried to charitable organizations in all parts of the country.

Pale-faced and lean individuals, especially cigarette smokers and drug fiends, emerge from low saloons and opium joints every time there is a new discussion to prevent or a new movement concerning the spread of tuberculosis. They cough and ask for "a few cents, mister," to help them on their way to Arizona or New Mexico. There are also many victims of mine and mill accidents—more, perhaps, than there were men employed in the first place. They require artificial legs, they plead, but never buy them, and even sell or pawn those that are given them by individuals or charity societies. Taking their own word for it, Mrs. Solenberger found that 80 per cent of the crippled beggars she talked with were not injured while at work.

Always after a panic in business men become insane because of their losses or through worry and the want of food. Some of them escape from their relatives and friends, others have no relatives or friends. They go along with the ever-existing army of homeless creatures until officers of the law and charity workers learn of their condition and have them sent to infirmaries and asylums. When small businesses are in a lull, it is most impossible for them to start again. One man, by the records of the Foundation, broke his hip. Inside of a month he lost \$15,000 which he had deposited in an unsafe bank. A cripple for life, penniless, and disheartened, he sought help at a charitable institution. Another man failed during the panic of 1893. Immediately afterward he went blind. He had to beg his bread.

There were 132 homeless old men among Mrs. Solenberger's thousand. Half of them, she says, had such entries as these on the records made by herself or her assistants: "Little work this winter. Have almost starved to death. Cannot bear the thought of going to the poorhouse. Penniless, friendless, discouraged." Most of the men were Americans; a few of them had been graduated from colleges. In thirty-nine cases liquor, vice, or improvidence was the cause of their helplessness and impoverishment. Twenty-five of the men, however, were of good character. They had always supported themselves, but their work and wages had been irregular, or they had reared large families, or they had been poor managers, or ill-health or accidents had cut down their earning ability. After a man reaches the age of sixty, mills and factories do not want him. Work, for the most part, when he gets it, is only temporary. Even strong, healthy men of fifty find it almost impossible to obtain employment.

The lives of a number of the old men show that restlessness and mental instability are responsible for a good many human failures. A farmer's son learned to be a harnessmaker. After getting religion, he preached for six years. Then he studied law and was a successful lawyer. Next, he went into politics. Finally he became a drunkard and a beggar. Another beggar had been a banker and still another a teacher of Greek and Latin. Summed up, the studies of the Russell Sage Foundation demonstrate, if any demonstration is necessary, that right living, with economy and good management, almost invariably brings peace and independence in old age.

Seasonal labor, so necessary for the Green Lakes in the Western grain fields, at the Northern lumber camps, and in the construction of railroads, has demoralized thousands of men, because it breaks up the steady habit of work. Sailors, lumberjacks and harvest hands return to the cities after their seasons are over and idle their time away in lodging houses and saloons. Many of them drink up the wages they have saved. May be they are robbed men of sixty ought to be considered. They gave the old swindlers a new line of prom-

run out of money long before navigation is open again or there is more wheat to cut. As a rule, they are unskilled men.

Once they try begging in the street a certain proportion of them never give it up. Should they attempt to put coal away for householders or shovel snow off the sidewalks they are called "Mollies" when they return to their miserable lodging houses at night. It is disgraceful, in the opinion of a beggar or a swindler, to work. Beggarism has its etiquette and its aristocracy. There are families of mendicants, as there are families of preachers, lawyers and doctors.

Considerable imagination is shown by members of the tribe. Imposture is their only trade. They work at it with the same zeal that an inventor experiments with the laws of mechanics. Moreover, no one can call them up in the morning or tell them when to go to bed. Noon is the same to them as any other hour, and the blowing of the factory whistles makes them laugh. The seasonal laborer, if he is deficient in pride, or the drunkard, comes within their influence and is probably lost. Clergymen, after reaching middle age, have become beggars by reason of drink or drugs. Strong parents—strong in character and mind—have moral wankings for children, and they often beg. Of the 132 beggars observed by Mrs. Solenberger, 8 were college men, 32 had a common school education, 63 were native Americans, 33 were sons, 24 had been in prison and 46 were tramps.

Boys born in the slums, of intemperate parents, grow up in ignorance and without craftsmanship or principles. Numbers of them become tramps and then beggars. Others become criminals. Once in a while there is a woman tramp. Now and then there is a large family of perambulating vagrants. A blind father, a mother and seven children, the oldest of whom was feeble minded, travelled for a long time between Illinois and Pennsylvania. They cost the charity societies and people of Chicago more than \$10,000. The Russell Sage Foundation, in its figures bearing on 230 tramps studied at random, shows that 362 of them were Americans, 100 were foreign born, 100 were college graduates, 100 were workingmen, 100 were travelling salesmen and peddlers were found among the number. A man of seventy had been a wandering vagrant for thirty-five years. Several had never done a day's work in their lives. With many men tramping gets to be a mania. They must leave a city the very day they arrive. The direction whether they go is unimportant so long as they get started. Day after day, for years at a time, they are ever in motion.

Another class tramps only in warm weather. Thousands of men leave almshouses when the birds appear in the spring for the freedom and license of the road, drifting back again before winter. The periodic tramp, perhaps a workman of unusual skill, is to be seen on almost every freight train. He may stay for a month or a year in one place, but the call of the open road is too strong for him. Some tramps own property and some receive remittances from disgraced relatives conditioned on their remaining away from home.

So long as tramps can ride where they will, with no more than a kick occasionally, so long as the laws of states, counties and municipalities lack uniformity, and so long as local judges turn vagrants loose for fear they will become a charge on the taxpayers who have elected them to office, idle, vicious and unfeeling men will continue to cross and recross the country in two ragged and disorderly armies.

Belgium and Switzerland have established labor colonies, where trades are taught and industry is compulsory. Russell Sage's money may open the way for something of the kind in America.

(Copyright, 1911, by James B. Morrow.)

## A Million Dollars Daily for Good Roads and Most of It Just Sunk in the Mud

So Says an Expert in Uncle Sam's Employ Who Is Working Hard to Eliminate This Waste.

Reaching the gospel of good roads from an exhibition train, in every out-of-the-way place reached by the lines tributary to the big railway systems, is Uncle Sam's latest innovation in the great good roads campaign that is being engineered from the office of public roads in Washington.

One of these trains has just completed a summer tour over the Southern Railway, from Washington to points as far south as Florida and the Gulf. It is now being transferred to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad for another tour during the fall and winter.

Trains are being equipped and schedules prepared for tours over the Frisco system in the West, and over the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis road, from Nashville. These three "good roads specials" are the forerunners of what is expected to be a great co-operative plan of the government and the large railroad systems to instruct farmers and the officials of township and municipal governments in the science of "making every dollar count."

Models of every important type of road construction are carried in the special train. There are miniature reproductions of concrete culverts, bridges and drains, such as farmers or country road builders can build without the assistance of engineers or trained roadmakers. There are models of all kinds of road drainage systems, showing the work from the foundation to the finished surface; and exhibitions of small models of machinery and homemade implements that will make country road work cheap, but scientifically accurate.

The United States spends \$1,000,000 a day on its roads, and most of the money is literally sunk in the mud," says Logan Waller Page, director of the office of public roads in Washington.

dertake co-operation with the government in running a three car train over its lines for instruction to the local communities in road building, and the plan has been so successful and promises such important results in the improvement of country roads that important railroad lines all over the country are now asking for the privilege of joining the campaign.

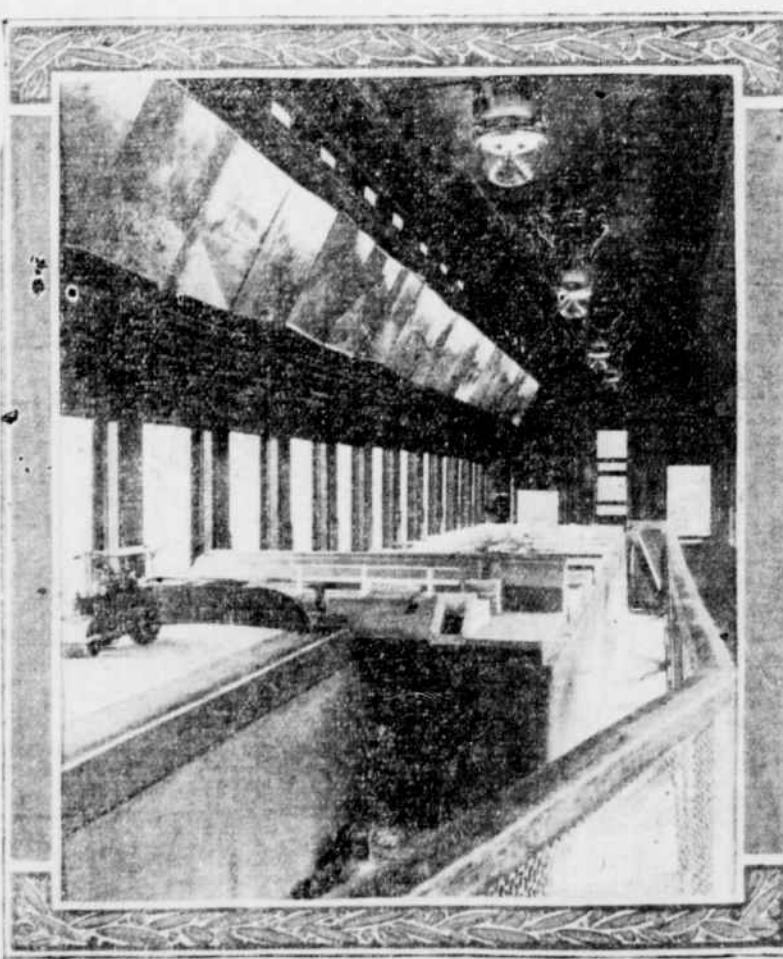
The good roads special is the outgrowth of the exhibition of road work made by the government at the Seattle exposition, the National Corn Show at Omaha, the Southern Appalachian exposition at Knoxville, and the National Land Show at Chicago. The models shown there were gathered in a special car and sent first on a sixty day tour of Pennsylvania, with marked success. Out of that trip grew the co-operative plan that is now to be pushed into every part of the country as rapidly as the government can furnish exhibits and lecturers to accompany the special trains.

Three sets of the road models are now being completed in Washington to supply the trains that will start out this fall. The

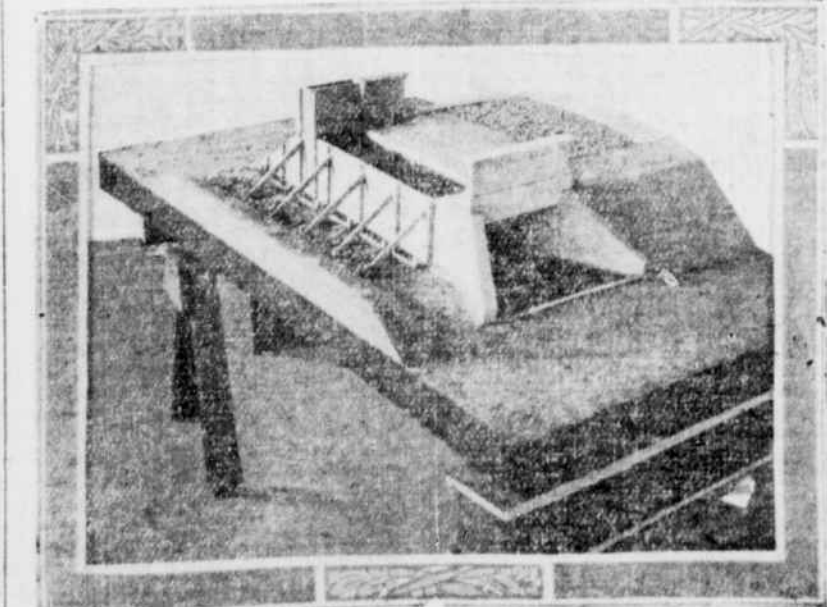
government is unable to furnish the lecturers and construction superintendents for more trains at the present time or to equip the trains with sets of models and lanterns and picture machines. The trains are furnished by the railroads, and hauled without expense, the government paying for the transportation of the two experts with each train, their salaries, and the expense of equipping the trains with models.

"Since we began making exhibitions at the large fairs, like the Seattle exposition, there has been a demand for a good roads exhibit at every state or local fair," says Director Page. "It is a sort of Donnybrook fair for us all the time. We cannot furnish separate exhibits enough to meet the demand, but the travelling exhibits are being made as complete as the government can make them, and they are expected to accomplish much more good than would stationary exhibits at local fairs."

To teach correct road building methods to the country districts, where money is not to be had either for expensive types of road or for the employment of skilled



THE "MODEL" CAR OF A GOOD ROADS SPECIAL TRAIN. All the approved types of road building and some of the condemned are plainly shown in miniature.



MODEL TO SHOW THE FARMERS HOW TO BUILD CONCRETE CULVERTS.

engineers, is the primary purpose of the good roads train. The government office of public roads has developed its field of activity greatly in the last few years. It is sending expert road supervisors into hundreds of communities to teach proper methods to the local road builders, and through the device of the special good roads train it expects to teach road building in hun-

dreds of sections that cannot be easily reached by other means. Where the states handle appropriations or directly supervise the work, careful and competent engineering methods are followed," says Mr. Page, "and excellent roads are built as a part of a comprehensive scheme of highways."

engineers cannot be employed, and where untrained men are forced to spend their own time and their own and their neighbors' money in the effort to keep the country roads passable and in good condition, there is a great need for instruction and help."

The good roads train reaches the people directly interested, many of whom would not otherwise come in contact with the government's good roads bureau, and who would not have the chance to inspect an exhibit at a fair or exposition. The farmer is the man who needs good roads, declares Mr. Page, and the man for whose benefit the government is striving to perfect simple but effective methods of keeping country roads in condition.

The cost of hauling a load of wheat from the farm to the shipping point is often more than the cost of transporting that wheat from the shipping point to Liverpool. Mr. Page declares efficiency of the farm team can be increased anywhere from 20 to 50 per cent if the road repair and road building work in the country is properly done.

"Between \$500,000,000 and \$1,000,000,000 would be saved annually in the United States if every state would improve its main highways to the highest point of efficiency," is one of the striking statements made by Mr. Page.

The improvement of the road increases the efficiency of the farmer's transportation method, opens up new country for local trade, widens the farmer's horizon, brings general prosperity to the local communities, and automatically raises the price of land, he adds.

The road models that form a chief part of the exhibits in the three good roads trains are interesting reproductions of highways in course of construction. They are all made in the top story of the building occupied by the office of public roads in Washington, and the real materials used for different kinds of road building and finishing are used in the models. Everything is on the scale of one-twelfth, so that an inch of the model represents a foot of road.

The road models consist of wide foundations of lumber, properly arched to conform to the curve of a road and its ditches. On this foundation the road-building material is laid, beginning with the first preparation of the road bed for the foundation material. A single model will show a short stretch of road in each stage of its preparation, from the foundation to the

Sending Free Exhibition Trains Through Country Districts, with Teachers, to Instruct the Farmers.

completed traffic road. The binding material actually used on the road is used in the model, and the lecturer who demonstrates from the model is able to give his visitors an accurate idea of how a road should be laid.

Models show scrapers and drags at work on the roads, giving illustrations of how road machinery should be used and the condition the road should be in when the work is completed. The handling of dirt roads is the subject of several models, as proficiency in the work of keeping dirt roads in condition is most to be desired in the country.

One car of the train is devoted exclusively to the models. A passageway leads along the side, so that they may be examined at close range. In this car are models, also, of road building machinery, stone crushers, concrete mixers, steam rollers, scrapers, split-log drags and other machinery needed for extensive road building. There are models of concrete bridges and culverts, showing how the moulds are made and how the work can be done by inexperienced hands.

The gospel of good roads in the country district, and this the federal experts preach with enthusiasm wherever the good roads train goes. The country dirt road is the farmer's transportation line, and to keep it in condition without going to the expense of new surfaces or costly repairs is the great problem of the country community. The split log, dragged over the surface after rains, at a cost often as low as 50 cents a mile, has solved this problem in many sections of the country, and is keeping thousands of miles of dirt road free from ruts, level and conducive to easy travel.

The second car of the special is the lecture car, fitted up with lantern and moving picture machines, and with seats for a large audience. The office of public roads has a collection of pictures that would stir the conscience of any one guilty of neglecting road improvement. There are

Continued on seventh page.